

96

4105.aa.67

THE
DESCRIPTION
OF A
PRESBYTERIAN:

K Exemplify'd in his Character:
Humbly Address'd to those Gentlemen,

That by the
IMPUTATION
OF THE
HIGH CHURCH

Are lately Added to that
FAMOUS PARTY.

But we Desire to hear of thee, what thou thinkest; for as concerning this Sect, we know it is every where spoken against. Acts. 28. 22.

— *En quo discordia Civis*
Perduxit miseros — *Virg.*

L O N D O N:
Printed; and are to be sold by E. Matthews at the
Bible in Pater-noster-Row; E. Harrison at the Royal-
Exchange; and A. Dod without Temple Bar; 1715.
Price 3 d. or 20 s. a Hundred.

1974



(3)

T H E

DESCRIPTION

O F A

PRESBYTERIAN, &c.

Gentlemen! You see whither you are brought at last. Strange and unexpected Conversion! Who would have thought, that so many Persons of Honour, and Eminent Quality, lately as valuable Sons of the Church as any of their High-flown Brethren, shou'd now be rank'd among [the *Presbyterians*! But lift up your Heads Gentlemen, and be not asham'd of your New Name; especially, when it is assign'd you by those Authentick God-Fathers, the Canonical Clergy and Dignitaries of the Church. What tho' the Name be lately made Odious! and be employ'd as Equivalent to Schismatick, Factionous, Republican, Enemy to Church and State; yet the Consciousness of your own Innocence will be in some measure your support; and will let you see, how injurously and unjustly those Names are, or may be, cast upon your Innocent Neighbours; and how little some Mens Tongues or Pens are to be reckon'd as any Slander. Besides, you have very Famous Predecessors upon the same Roll, or upon that of *Puritan*, which is but Predecessor or Ancestor to the *Presbyterians*. Perhaps you will find some of the most Grave, Religious, Venerable Metropolitans and Prelates, such as *Parker* and *Grindal*, (that *Perfidious Prelate*, says the late High-Church Champion; which must intimate that Arch-Bishop to be a Patron of *Puritans*) *Abbot*, *Davenant*, *Hall*, *Usher*, and down from Arch-Bishop *Cranmer* to the present primate of all *England*, to be enroll'd in the same Catalogue. And who wou'd be asham'd of such Excellent Company! When they have bestow'd the most Pious of their Bishops and Doctors upon us, they may retain the Rest, without our Envy, to themselves, if they please. Are you then arrived into the *Presbyterian* Name and Reputation,

tation, and will ye not take it ill, if we refuse to let you into an acquaintance with us, and with the Myſteries of our Sect and Religion; you have been long ſtrangers to us; and it can't be expected, that you ſhould be ſuddenly illuminated, and furniſh'd with a clear Proſpect of our Faith and Devotion. We are a Company, you know, every where ſpoken againſt; your former Leaders have continually aimed to caſt a miſt before your Eyes, that we might not be known or underſtood; nor, perhaps did ſome of us eaſily or ſoon become what we are. But what we are in Principle and Profeſſion, it is meet you ſhou'd know; That if, upon Converſation with us, and our Sentiments, you like us not, you may Return to the Church, out of which you have been voted, if ſhe will Receive you. We will endeavour therefore to Delineate theſe *Presbyterians* before you. And ſo, we will begin with their Name. The Name *Presbyterian* is drawn from the Name *Presbyter*, ſignifying an *Elder*; and they ſeem to be call'd *Presbyterians*, becauſe their Writers in Church Controverſies, are won't to argue and plead, that the noted *Presbyters* or *Elders* of the Churches, in the new Teſtament, are but the ſame Order or Office, with the Biſhops mention'd there; as on the other Hand, they that plead that the Biſhops mention'd there, were a Diſtinct and Superiour Order and Office, to the noted *Presbyters* or *Elders* there, are uſually call'd *Episcopal*. So that I hope Gentlemen the name will carry no great Harm in it, when you ſhall have weigh'd the Scriptures that intimate their Equality and Identity; and ſhall alſo have conſidered what the Famous *Jewell*, Biſhop of *Salisbury* (who may alſo almoſt paſs for one of your Predeceſſors) ſays to his *Popiſh* Adverſary, *Mr. Harding*; But what meant *Mr. Harding* here to come in with the Difference between *Prieſts*, (i. e. *Presbyters*) and *Biſhops*? Thinketh he that *Prieſts* and *Biſhops* hold only (i. e. as to their Original) on Tradition? Or is it ſo horrible an Heresy, as he maketh it, to ſay, That by the Scriptures of God a *Biſhop* and a *Prieſt* are all one? Or knoweth he, how far, and unto whom he reacheth the Name of an Heretick? (And we may ſay the Name of a Schiſmatick.)

Verity Chryſoſtom ſaith, Inter Episcopum & Presbyterum intereſt ſerme nihil. Between a Biſhop and a Prieſt, in a manner there is no difference. S. Hierom ſaith ſomewhat in rougher Sort,
Audio

Audio quendam in tantam erupisse vecordiam ut Diaconos Presbyteris, id est, Episcopis antiserret; Cùm Apostolus perspicue doceat, Presbyteros eosdem esse quos Episcopos. I hear say, there is one become so peevish, that he setteth Deacons before Priests, that is to say, before Bishops; whereas the Apostle plainly Teacheth us, That Priests and Bishops be all one.

St. Augustine saith, Quid est Episcopus, nisi Primus Presbyter, hoc est, summus Sacerdos? What is a Bishop, but the first Priest, that is to say, the Highest Priest? So says S. Ambrose, Episcopi & Presbyteri una Ordinatio est; uterq; enim Sacerdos est; sed Episcopus Primus est. There is but one Consecration of Priest and Bishop. For both of them are Priests. But the Bishop is the First.

All these and other more Holy Fathers together with S. Paul the Apostle, for thus saying according to Mr. Hardings Advice, must be holden for Hereticks. Jewell's Apol. Part 2. p. 202. And if we shou'd gain all these for Presbyterians (for Presbyterians do not Refuse a Primacy or Precedency among the Elders) according to the Etymology and Reason of the Name, we need not be afraid or asham'd to march under the shadow of it. From the Name pass we to the Bearers of it; and let us Seriously Consider what and who those Presbyterians are, that make such a noise in the Land, and to whom, by your former Brethren, you are so kindly Remitted. Will you please to know then that these Presbyterians, according to their Confessions, Principles, and Practices (as agreeable to their Principles, as those of most Parties are to Theirs, in this Day of Common Degeneracy, in which there are Faults in All) are such as These.

1. They believe, that there is one Eternal, Glorious God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the Wise and Holy Governour of the World, in and by Legislation, Judgment and Execution. Herein they are Distinguished from those that are commonly call'd *Atheists*; if there be any such in the Deliberate Perswasion and Sentiment of their Minds.

2. They Believe, that, considering the uncertainty, Darkeness and Division of the World, about many important Articles, relating to Mans ultimate Happiness, it is needful and Expedient, that this Governour of the World shou'd afford some Superiour Revelation of his Will and the way to Happiness, than what our Natural Mind and Light will discover;

ver ; that so Man may more steadily and assuredly be guided to his highest Felicity.

3. Finding a Book in the World, call'd the *BIBLE*, containing in it a Doctrine most Spiritual, Mysterious and Sublime ; Pure, Purifying and Holy ; wonderfully Calculated for the Glory of God, the Good of the World, the Honour, Dignity and advancement of Man ; Penn'd by Holy Men (that breath Sincerity, Wisdom and Love to God and Man) confirm'd by Open, Frequent, Invincible Miracles, they can't but acknowledge, that That Book is of God ; that it contains the kind and wise Discoveries of God, to Conduct his Creature, Man, to his ultimate Perfection. Hereby, and by the former, they are Distinguished from those that are more properly call'd *Theists* or *Deists* ; as also all *Anti-Scripturists*.

4. They Believe, that That *Jesus Christ*, so copiously Described, and Declared in the Writings of the *New-Testament* is that Great *Messias*, that was promised to the Church of the *Old-Testament*, the most Excellent (and indeed in his way the only) High-Priest, Prophet and King of the Church ; the most Glorious Minister and Representative of the Blessed God. Herein they are Distinguished from *Jews* and *Mahometans*.

5. They Believe and Receive the Doctrine of the Three famous Creeds, usually call'd, the *Apostle's*, the *Nicene* and the *Athanasian*. Whereby they are Distinguished from Diverse Sects and Opinionists, call'd *Arrian*, *Socinian*, *Sabellian*

6. They receive Thirty Six (unless, bating perhaps one small Clause) of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of *England*. And if they hesitate about either the Sense, or the Truth of Two or Three of those Articles, penn'd so long ago, can that be any wonder or any great Fault, while the things hesitated about, are not pleaded to be Fundamental to Christianity ? And hereby they shou'd seem to unite far with the Church ; and to be Distinguished much from *Papists*, *Self-justiciaries*, and *Remonstrants*, whom the Antient Church intended to Exclude.

7. They Esteem and Value the first Day of the Week as the *Lords-Day*, appointed by Him for Commemoration of his Resurrection and Redemption ; which therefore they desire to addict to and Employ in such Religious Services,

as will Glorify their God and Redeemer, and tend to their own improvement in Divine Knowledge and Piety. And hereby they are Distinguished from those that either admit no Sabbath at all, or those that are call'd *Sabbatarians*, as choosing the Old Saturday-Sabbath.

8. They Believe, that the Persons of the Pious are more nearly and happily Related unto God and Christ, than others are; and not they only, but their Off-spring likewise; and that in Virtue of such Relation, with intimations of Mercy in the Divine Covenant; such Off-spring is to be presented unto God and his Favour, in and by the Seal of the Covenant, the Solemnity of Baptism. Whereby they are distinguished from those of their Neighbours they usually call, *Anabaptists*.

9. They Believe, that Christian Religion is worthy and ought to be maintain'd and propagated in the World; that this can be best done by those that are statedly separate for such sacred Function; competently fitted, and Solemnly obliged to attend on that holy Employ. That their is needful therefore, and Divinely Appointed such an Office in and about Religion, as is ordinarily call'd the Ministry. And herein they may be Distinguished now-a-days from many, and perhaps from some of your selves also, who may incline to reckon that Office nothing but Priestcraft.

10. They Humbly suppose, that Christianity Shines best by its own Light; that its Worship was design'd to be pure plain, unaffected, Spiritual; that it shou'd be Represented and manag'd therefore, as near as may be (tho' Gravely and Solemnly, yet) without those Additions of our Fancied Ornaments and Embellishments, that are neither necessary to the Decency of the Service, nor to the Edification of its Professors. And that, because, 1. The Power to add such suppos'd Ornaments and Embellishments, seems to be of ill Consequence; and of such Extent, as may soon alter the Face of Christian Worship, from what it was, when the Commission'd Ordainers of it left it. 2. It will occasion great contest, where that Power is lodg'd. 3. The Exercise of such a pretended Power has caus'd sad Deformation of Christian Worship, in the Churches; and especially in the Papacy. 4. Such Additions usually cause Rents and Divisions in the Church. For how can Men's Consciences be Sub-
jected

jected to all the Appointments of others, as fallible as themselves? 5. It will scarce be agreed, when such Additions are enough, and where they shall End. 6. Such a Pretended Power occasions *Atheists* and *Theists* to call our Religion in Question, and to lay it under the vile Imputation of Sham, Trick, Gullery and Priestcraft. 7. May it not sufficiently appear that all Ecclesiastical Power now is Ministerial only: Such, as is only to take care of the prudent, Faithful Execution of the Saviour's Commands!

11. They see and Lament the Corruptions of the Christian World, in Doctrine, Discipline, and Life. But acknowledge, that, so far as they can Learn, they take the Reformed Churches, to be the purest Part of the Catholick Church: and judge, that Christianity (in its Doctrine, Worship and Government) is most miserably obscur'd, depraved, adulterated in the Church or Synagogue of *Rome*.

12. They Desire to Bless Divine Providence and Goodness for the Reformation so happily begun and prospered in this our Native Land; and Judge that the Supremacy here Claim'd and Exercis'd by the Bishop (or Prince) of *Rome*, was highly Injurious to the Prerogative of the Crown and Property of the Subjects. And so they were won't to take the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy to our own Monarchs.

13. They like and approve Monarchy as the most Noble Mode of Government; They highly admire that Mode of Monarchy that has been by our Ancestors, so wisely stated and Established in this Realm; as being so well adapted to the Genius of the Natives of the Land, and to the great and useful Ends of Government, and so well securing the Prerogative of the Monarch, the Dignities of the Nobles and Properties of the Commons. Whereby they hope they are Distinguished from the *Antimonarchical* and *Republicans*.

14. They own themselves obliged to concur to the support of the Government (in Peace and in War) under which they live; and accordingly have been always ready to pay the Taxes, Customs, Duties, that the Legislature thinks meet at any time to lay upon the Subjects. And perhaps, throughout this long War, none have been more ready to contribute their shares (however strait their Circumstances may be on other Accounts) to the common Expense, than they.

15. They

15. They judge it their Duty to pay to Governours and Superiors all that Civil Honour Deference and Respect, that the Laws, Customs, and Common usages of the Country do assign them; and that, in putting off their Hats, standing Bare, Bowing and (to their Sovereign) Kneeling; as also in taking an Oath to attest their Loyalty, or to end Controversies in their Courts of Judicature, Whereby it is known that they are Distinguished from such of their Neighbours as are usually call'd *Quakers*.

16. They bear unfeigned Allegiance to the King's most Excellent Majesty: Continually making mention of Him in their Prayers; Blessing Divine Goodness for the manifold Benefits and Blessings they have Receiv'd by, and under His Majesty's Wife and Prosperous Administration.

17. They Humbly admire and congratulate the Happy wisdom and care of the Legislature in securing our Religion, Laws and Welfare, by seasonable Enacting and Establishing a Protestant Succession to the Crown and Government.

18. They Humbly Thank the Legislature, or Legislative Powers, of this Realm, that were pleas'd to vouchsafe them the Leave and Liberty of Publick Worshipping of God, according to the Dictates of their own Judgments, in Exempting them from the Penalties of Diverse Laws made or turn'd against them. The Rigorous Execution of which our Parliament had found and Voted to be Encouraging to Popery and injurious to our Common Religion.

19. They Respect the Authority and Laws, by which the Publick Temples or Churches, with their Buildings, Glebe and Tithes are disposed of to the Canonical Clergy of the Church of *England*. And they are always willing (without Disparagement to any be it spoken) as any of their Neighbours, to pay their Tithes and Dues to the Clergy. And they suppose, That did not they sometimes in their Voluntary Contributions give as much as their Church-Neighbours, towards the Encouragement of their Clergy, their Annuities in many places would be lower than they are.

20. They Judge it their Duty to cultivate and maintain Peace and Union, and Love with all Christians; particularly with all Protestants as far as they can; to Live Peaceably with all, and to pray for the Welfare of their Enemies.

These (Gentlemen) are the horrid things commonly call'd *Presbyterians*; against whom you have heard, so many frightful accusations and invectives from the Pulpit, and seen 'em from the Press; among which, I can't question there lies one still invincibly upon your minds, as a strong prejudice against your new Name, as an uncontrollable Contradiction to the 13th Article of this Description. For if these *Presbyterians* thus admire and approve our Monarchy, as is there pretended, how came they to overthrow it, and to bring one of our Excellent Monarchs to a most Tragical End?

The Conclusion of that Illustrious Prince is a sad story indeed, Gentlemen. I have scarce heart to look into it: But what if the horrid fact be continually charged upon the Innocent, or those that were least Guilty in the Nation! How will you forgive their Accusers, and those that have long bubbled you with Fable and Falsehood! Or what if the Accusers themselves or their Ancestors were more Guilty, the sight and sound of which they wou'd Divert by their noisy Declamations. Frighted Guilt is wont to be Clamorous, while Innocence is still and silent. 'Tis not here Room to look into the History and Transactions of those unhappy Times; only take some hints in short, that may a little wipe off this stain from the injur'd *Presbyterians*.

As 1. What if the Numbers and Circumstances of those that staid in England, under *Laud's* Ministration were reduc'd so low and despicable, that it was as much beyond their Power, as beside their Will, to attempt any Wars and Commotions here? 2. What if there were not Six *Presbyterians* in that Parliament that took up Arms in their own Defence (as they said)? 3. What, if the most *Presbyterian* Part, afterwards carry'd it by a great Majority, That the Answers of the King to the Propositions of both Houses were a ground for the Houses to proceed upon for the Settlement of the Peace of the Kingdom? 4. What if the Soldiery cou'd not carry their Designs, till they had Excluded an Hundred and Fifty Members or more, that were then the most inclinable to the *Presbyterians*? 5. What if the Solemn League and Covenant, brought in by the Scots were the King's greatest Security, and the greatest Bar the Soldiers met with to their Designs? 6. What if the *Presbyterian* Ministers publickly pray'd and Preach'd

(in

(in great Danger to themselves) against all attempts offer'd against the King's Life? 7. What if a Company of those *Presbyterians*, in and about *London*, to the Number of Forty Seven met together, drew up a Representation, and presented it by some of the Subscribers, to the General *Fairfax*, wherein they plainly remonstrate to their Proceedings and tell him and the Council of War, *That they had engag'd themselves by Oath to preserve his Majesty's Person and priviledges of Parliament?* This was Delivered *January 18. 1648.* 8. What if these *Presbyterian* Ministers Publish'd another Paper, subscrib'd by above Fifty of them (the Names I have by me, but do not stay to count 'em) wherein they Proclaim themselves bound in Duty to God, Religion, the King, Parliament and the Kingdom, *to Profess before God, Angels and Men thus, That we verily believe, that which is so much feared to be now in Agitation, the taking away the Life of the King in the present way of Tryal, is, not only not agreeable to the Word of God, the Principles of the Protestant Religion (never yet stain'd with the least drop of the Blood of a King) or the Fundamental Constitution and Government of this Kingdom; but contrary to them, as also to the Oath of Allegiance; the Protestation of May 5. 1641. and the Solemn League and Covenant, from all which, or any of Which Engagements, we know not any Power on Earth able to absolve us or others?* What cou'd they do or say more? 9. What if the Arch-Bishop of *York* was a General in the Parliament-Army, and many *Presbyterians* in the Kings! One of whom (*viz. Mr. Martin of Weedon*) lost an Arm in his Majesty's Service; nor was the other afterward pardoned, but laid in Jail for Non-Conformity. 10. What if the *Scotch* Commissioners copiously pleaded against all attempts upon his Majesty's Life: Arguing the Contract betwixt them and the *English*, that no Hurt should be done to his Majesty's Person? And yet cou'd not prevail, but wou'd be gone, lest by their presence they shou'd seem to Countenance the Fact. 11. Where were all the *High-Church* of the Nation, that so little was said or done by them to prevent a Fact, they had been abominating ever since the Restoration? Had they lost their Principles? Or did they trim and trick to an occasional Conformity! Had not *Dr. Seaman* (a *Presbyterian*) some Reason, do ye think to Preach to them from *David's* Words to the Servants (or Guards) of King *Saul*, *As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye*

have not kept your Master, the Lords Anointed. 1. Sam. 26. 16. 12. Did you ever hear of a High-Church-Man, that swounded and died away at the News of that Prince's Death, as Mr. Geery the Presbyterian did. 13. We have heard of High-Church-Men Plotters against King William's Life: But were they all easy under the Usurper, when Eight Presbyterian Ministers were sent to the Tower for Plotting for the King; and one of them (Mr. Love) with a Gentleman, was Beheaded? 14. Did not these Presbyterians begin and accomplish the Restoration of King Charles II? But I am afraid, Gentlemen, of tiring you with particulars. How little have you heard of these things from the Pulpit! But you see something by experience, how much the Innocent are aspersed and Calumniated; and that, by those that profess themselves ordain'd to Preach against the Father of Lies and Lyers. If any Gentleman desires any more History of this Nature, I wou'd only remit him to the very Learned Bockart's Letter to Dr. Morley, at the End of his *Geographia Sacra*; where he may see also how Scotland, and the French Divines, and Geneva herself, acquitted themselves upon that mournful occasion. There I confess I found many Particulars I had never heard of before. But yet thought it strange that a French Divine must be put to the trouble of rehearsing so many Heads in the Presbyterians Vindication, which that English Divine shou'd have known before; or knowing, shou'd not have Extorted such a Letter. But the French-man has assurance enough to tell him; *Neq, enim ignoras rem planè aliter se habere.*

Well then, Gentlemen, We will not be Ashamed of our Name, as supposing any Disloyalty is Comprehended in it; tho' I confess, that was once to me a great Prejudice against the Name; But it is but a Vapour. Perhaps, it may be proved that the Presbyterians were, in those perillous times, the most Loyal Subjects; and then we have there a Confirmation of our Thirteenth Article.

You have thus seen, Gentlemen, the Principles of Presbyterians. You are Strangers to their Publick Worship. Shou'd you come there, how can they take it ill, that cast you off as False-Brethren, and Vote you more Dangerous than the Presbyterians themselves? Our Assemblies are more hated than Idol-Temples, the Chappels of Rome. But, alas! What have we there, but what is for the Substance of it, allow'd

in your Parish-Churches? Have we reading of Scriptures? So have you. Have we sometimes Expositions of the Scriptures Read? Why not? As well as the Excellent *Herbert* Expound the Church-Offices and Service in his Parish by *Salisbury*? And as divers Divines Expound the Catechism! I suppose there are many Living; that have often heard the late Eminent Bishop of *Bristol*, Expound his Second Lesson, on a Lords-day in the Afternoon, in *Oxford*. Have we Preaching? So have you. Have we free, unprescribed Prayer before Sermon? So have you, or had you, I have often heard it. Bishops have oft so Pray'd. Have we Catechising of Youth, with Exposition of the Catechism? So have you in some Places. I have often been so Catechiz'd by a Worthy Doctor. Have we Singing of Psalms? So have you. Lastly, Have we Administration of Sacraments? So have you. All the Portions of our Religious Worship, are acknowledged by your Selves; and must needs be Reasonable, if appointed by God.

Do you ask me then wherein and wherefore we so Sollicitously withdraw from the Established Church? Or what is there, almost, in all this Description, that may not agree to one of that Church! Alas! Gentlemen! Why shou'd you lead me into Controversy? You are not accusom'd to it, you have been addicted to your Ease and Mirth, or, it may be, to Political Studies, and wou'd think it strange, to hear our Ecclesiastical Causes and Enquiries reported. Sad it is, that we have such Theological Wars! But who can help it! Sad it is, that you shou'd be prejudic'd against Religion, by the vexatious Contentions of them that are to Preach it! We were long ago foretold that offences wou'd come, and they have risen in abundance, You have seen them, felt them. O that our Gentlemen had more of the Divine, to judge in our Controversies! And the Divines more of the Gentleman, to be condescending, courteous and obliging to each other, and to cut off, as far as may be, all occasions of mutual Offence.

Having reported so much of the Positive and Primary parts of *Presbyterian* Religion, why may I not stop there! Why shou'd I trouble you, Gentlemen, with that, that is but either Negative, or Appendage thereto? In other things we are Passive; and put upon the Care of keeping Religion

on undefiled, and delivering Divine Institutions to Posterity, in the plain and Humble Dress, in which they were Deliver'd either by the Lord himself, or by those that were Commission'd by Him. But how that was, perhaps you have not much consulted. Have you diligently studied those Scriptures by which you and we, and all our Controversies are to be judged ! May we address our selves to you, with the same Satisfaction, the Great Apostle did to the Prince, whom he thus accosts, *I think my self Happy, King Artaxerxes, because I shall Answer for my self this Day, before thee, touching all the things, whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially because I know thee to be expert in all Customs and Questions, which are among the Jews?* Will you please to Pardon, good Gentlemen, such homely Questions! You are yet known to us only by Name. We shall rejoyce to see you acquainted with our Lord, with his Laws, and with the Judge of our Controversies (which Protestants, against the Papists, say, is the Holy Bible) whether you judge for us or no.

Or, having been so long alienated from us, are you willing to have time allow'd, in order to acquire such preparatory Dispositions, as some may reckon needful to a Critical Judgment in our Case! Such an insight into the Holy Oracles; an awful Regard to the Authority and Faithfulness of the Blessed Jesus, a suitable Saviour and Relish of Divine and Spiritual Things, A single Desire to serve the Eternal Majesty most agreeably to his own Pleasure. An Humble Belief and fear of Divine jealousy. A Love of pure, untainted Religion. A Concern for the Peace and Healing of the Churches. Let us wait then for an improvement in these Endowments; and then we may hope for some candid Audience, and perhaps, some Cure of our Dangerous Breaches.

In the mean time, Gentlemen, why shou'd we trouble you with impertinent Questions about such things as are call'd, Frames of Church Government, Liturgies and Ceremonies! Wherefore shou'd your Ease and Pleasure be disturbed by such odd, uncouth Disquisitions as these. What is the Divine Institution of Provincial Churches, with their Heads and Inspectors, Arch-Bishops? Or what is the Divine Institution of Diocesan Churches and their Governours, the Diocesan Bishops? Or of such *Presbyters*, that are but as Curates to such Bishops, acting for them because they

they cannot discharge the Service, that is to be done in the several parts and Parishes of the Diocesan Church? Or of such Deacons, that are not ordain'd to, never undertook to discharge such Deaconship, as is appointed, *Acts. 6.* Or of the Episcopal Courts, and the several Officers and Offices belonging thereto? Alas! We may, at present, throw away these and twenty more strange, unprofitable Questions that will but perplex the Enquirer and ingender Strifes.

Are you willing to Plead, Gentlemen, that you are *Presbyterians* in Name only? And that violently attributed, not voluntarily assum'd. Let it be so. Yet is it not then ten Thousand pities, that for declining a Name, you shou'd run into apparent Enormities? That you shou'd be forc'd upon the Temptation or dreadful Necessity of Drinking, Cursing, Swearing, *Riotting* and Revelling (as it is suppos'd some do) the more Egregiously, in order to throw of the Villanous Name, and demonstrate to the World, that they are no *Presbyterians*? Alas! Dear Gentlemen! Is it not better ten Thousand times better, to venture upon the Name, yea upon all the Names given to an Apostle (while call'd, *Pestilent fellow, mover of Seditious, ringleader of a Sect*) than thus to venture upon practices confess'd to be notorious Sins, by all Churches; and to venture withal upon the Displeasure of an Holy God, and upon that Flaming Vengeance, that he has reserv'd for those, that (amidst all our Light) will not know him, and will not obey his avowed Gospel!

Will you please to bethink your selves, Gentlemen, what sort of Church this is, that thus refuses you! And of which such crimes must be the notorious Characteristics? Will such a Church, (by whatever Names and Titles it's Dignify'd and Distinguish'd) be owned by the Holy God, or by the Holy Head of the Holy Catholick Church? You can't but be assured, that such is not the Church that is by Law Established; nor, That of which His most Excellent Majesty is the Support and Ornament.

And then, Gentlemen, what is this but to cut of all the nice Questions hinted before, and to reduce all the Controversy betwixt the Church and the *Presbyterians* to one or other of these short Heads (to which indeed, the state of the Case has been long tending) *viz.* Whether there be such a thing as *Religion*! Or whether we are to be Holy and Serious

ous or no? Or whether there be such a thing as *Conscience*, and such a Glorious Being as God, the Governour of it?

You know, Gentlemen, who they are, that Engross to themselves the Name of the Church: You know, who they are, that have Disturb'd your Habitations, Affronted you to your Face, loading you with Opprobrious Names and Characters, Voted you out of their Church and the Sonship of it. And can that be any great Harm or Grief? Are they to be courted or valued, that deliver you up with so much Contempt to the *Presbyterians*? Are they to be Esteem'd as a Church, or an Honourable Part of it that make any Society Scandalous? Am I bound to cultivate Civil or Sacred Society with those that scorn Serious Piety? That deride the most uncontested Offices of Publick or of Domestic Religion? That encourage Vice and make the way to Heaven and Eternal Salvation Reproachfull, Difficult and Dangerous?

7 JUL 66
How many things have ye Suffer'd a late, Gentlemen? And is it not Pity, you shou'd suffer them in vain? Is it for Religion, while you aim to adapt your selves to the Humour, or those, that you Reckon have none at all? Is it for *Presbyterianism*, which you were neither Bred to, nor are acquainted with? O that it were for strict undisputed pieces of Godliness! Certainly, you cou'd not have suffer'd more than you have done, had you spent that time in the most Solemn Exercises of Religion (as Serious Prayers and Praises, Reading of Scriptures and Singing of Psalms) that has been spent in Rioting and Drunkenness, in Chambering and Wantonness, in Strifes and Envies. Then you had had a rich Satisfaction in the Review; and an internal Reward worth Suffering for. Then also, prehaps, you had had the Glorious hopes of an immortal Recompence in a future World, Ah! When shall it appear that Religion is the best Policy? That many are Suffering for nothing, or Suffering in the way to Hell, as much as others bear in the appointed Path to Unspeakable, Endless Felicity! When shall it appear, that inward Piety is not Fancy or Phanaticism? That Conscience is Real and indeed Indelible: That Honours are Vain: That Pleasures are delusive, Foolish and stinging in the End: That the World is a meer uncertainty: That Christianity is Noble and Heroic: That we are all hastning to our Long Home: For retirement to which, that you, Gentlemen, may be well prepared, is the Best Wish can be Bestow'd upon you.

ce;
?
to
ey
ou
nd
n-
re
fo
E-
ke
or
at
e-
to
nd

s it
ile
ou
ere
ict
ve
in
nd
has
nd
ich
uf-
pes
nen
are
uch
eli-
or
hat
ng-
hat
g to
nen,
ou.